

The Minister of Health

5 December 2014

Re HPV Vaccine: why is it being subsidised?

Dear Mr. Dutton,

I am bringing this published information to you from the university and I have written to you previously (23 July 2014 and 9 September 2014) about the global concerns about HPV vaccines. Yet it appears that you do not have to answer to the public. I am now going to provide you with a summarised statement from the World Health Organisation demonstrating that cervical cancer is not a disease of young people and that Pap screening is recommended by the WHO as the safest and most effective method of prevention for cervical cancer *for all women*.

Yet the Australian government is justifying the use of HPV vaccines by claiming '*there's actually no good evidence that screening is the best way to prevent cancers occurring in very young women*' (Dr. Julie Brotherton, ABC Radio, 1 September 2014). This comment was used to suggest that '*...those cancers (in very young women) tend to be fast growing and really the best strategy for those is vaccination.*'

There is no evidence for this statement. In fact it contradicts the WHO advice on the best way to prevent cervical cancer. Here is the WHO statement verifying that cervical cancer is extremely rare in young people and that Pap screening is the best and safest prevention:

WHO: 'Cervical cancer programs should start screening women aged 30 years or over ...: existing organised programmes should not include women under 25 years of age in the target population'. The WHO continues by saying 'the best age for screening is 35-45 years of age' and '*the rationale for not screening females aged 25 years is that invasive cancer is extremely rare below this age whilst the presence of transient HPV-induced cytological abnormalities is high. Screening people aged under 25 years may result in considerable over-treatment of lesions that would spontaneously regress. Starting screening at 25 years or*

later allows programmes to detect those lesions that would be more likely to progress to cancer' (1 p.8).

I have previously provided facts about HPV vaccines (and cervical cancer) that have not been provided to the public in the promotion campaigns. These facts demonstrate that the vaccine has not been proven safe or effective in preventing cervical cancer because it was only tested for 3 years (2003-2006) in women under 26 years of age – an age group that does not get cervical cancer (as described above).

Please could you explain to the Australian public why this vaccine is being subsidised by the government for all adolescents (AUS\$450 per person) when this vaccine has not been demonstrated to be safer or more effective than Pap screening, and *Pap screening will still be needed by vaccinated women?* This is particularly an issue because the vaccine has now been removed from the recommended vaccination schedules in India and Japan and court cases regarding deaths and adverse events are occurring in Spain, France and India. Denmark and Columbia are also debating the removal of this vaccine.

Reference:

1. World Health Organisation (WHO), 2008. Preparing for the Introduction of HPV Vaccine in the WHO European Region: Strategy Paper. Vaccine-Preventable Diseases and Immunisation Program. WHO Regional Office for Europe. Denmark.

Kind regards,

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